

2003 Report of Consumer Survey of Dental Plans

In the fall of 2002, the Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board (MRMIB), through a contract with an independent vendor (DataStat, Inc.), conducted a consumer survey of dental plans participating in the Healthy Families Program (HFP). This survey was the second annual consumer survey of dental plans using the instrument developed by members of the CAHPS[®] consortium. The results presented in this report are the only results of this type available in the country. To date, no other publicly funded insurance program has used the D-CAHPS[®] survey to evaluate dental services provided.

The survey was conducted to assess the satisfaction and experience families were having with participating dental plans and to provide existing and potential HFP applicants with information about their dental plan options. This report summarizes the results from the survey.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

The instrument used for the survey was developed by the CAHPS[®] consortium which modified it for the Healthy Families Program. The instrument was based on the Child Medicaid version of the Consumer Assessment of Health Plan Survey (CAHPS[®]) 2.0H which contains 70 questions pertaining to nine aspects of care. The aspects of care that were covered in the survey include access to care, customer service, communication of providers, and quality and satisfaction of dental plan services and dental care received. The responses to the survey questions were summarized into four global ratings and five composite scores. The global ratings included ratings of dental care, dental plan, regular dentists and specialists. The composite scores addressed getting needed dental care, getting needed care quickly, how well doctors communicate, helpfulness and

courteousness of doctor's office staff and customer service.

THE SURVEY SAMPLE

DataStat selected a random sample of families using a modified version of the NCQA (National Committee for Quality Assurance) protocols for conducting the CAHPS[®] 2.0H survey. Families with children between the ages of 4 and 18 years of June 30, 2002 and who were continuously enrolled in their dental plan for at least 12 months were eligible to participate in the survey. Families with children under the age of 4 were not selected for the survey because of the likelihood that these children would not have seen a dentist.

Of the families who were eligible for the survey, only those families who did not receive a previous HFP consumer survey for health plans were selected. This was to ensure that no family was burdened with having to complete a health and dental survey in the same year. The number of families selected for the survey from each dental plan participating in the HFP was 1,050. A total of 5,250 surveys were distributed. Table 1 shows the number of families who were selected for the survey for each participating dental plan.

Table 1 – Families Surveyed From Each Dental Plan

Dental Plan	Number of families surveyed
Access Dental	1,050
Delta Dental	1,050
Health Net Dental	1,050
Premier Access	1,050
Universal Care Dental	1,050
Total Program	5,250

Families selected for the survey received the survey in English, and either Spanish, Chinese, Korean or Vietnamese if one of these languages was designated as the primary language on the

families' HFP application. Table 2 outlines the distribution of the survey instruments mailed in each language for each health plan.

Table 2 – Distribution of Surveys in Each Language Group by Dental Plan

Dental Plan	Total	E	S	C	K	V
Access Dental	1,050	421	548	32	36	13
Delta Dental	1,050	477	470	59	26	18
Health Net Dental	1,050	393	584	48	19	6
Premier Access	1,050	704	342	1	1	2
Universal Care Dental	1,050	385	611	28	10	16
Total	5,250	2,380	2,555	168	92	55

E=English S=Spanish C=Chinese
K=Korean V=Vietnamese

THE SURVEY PROCESS

The survey was conducted using a protocol that was based on the protocol for the Medicaid CAHPS® 2.0H survey. Datastat conducted the survey over an eight week period using a single mode (mail-only) 5 step protocol between the months of September and December. This consisted of a pre-notification mailing, an initial survey mailing, a reminder postcard to all respondents, a second survey mailing and a second reminder postcard to non-respondents. The pre-notification and follow-up correspondences were developed based on recommended samples from the CAHPS® 2.0H protocol.

Table 3 – Survey Timeline

Pre-notification letters mailed:	September 17, 2002
1 st mailing of reminder packets:	September 23, 2002
2 nd mailing of survey packets:	October 21, 2002
2 nd mailing of reminder postcards:	October 28, 2002
Survey ends:	December 2, 2002

Because the D-CAHPS® survey is still being developed, the protocol for the telephone follow-up was not available for this survey.

SURVEY RESULTS

Response Rates

The response rate for the survey was 46.4 percent. This response rate exceeded the target response rate of 45 percent. The response rates were calculated by eliminating from the

surveys that were returned, those who did not meet the requirements for the survey. The number of usable surveys included only those surveys that were completed according to CAHPS® 2.0H protocol for conducting the survey. For this survey, 443 surveys were eliminated from the 5,250 surveys mailed, resulting in a net usable 4,807 surveys. Of these surveys, only 2,232 surveys were considered "usable" based on the CAHPS® 2.0H survey protocol.

Below are the response rates for each participating dental plan.

Table 4 -- Response Rates for Each Dental Plan

Dental Plan	Surveys mailed	Usable surveys	Usable responses	Response Rate
Access Dental	1,050	973	441	45.3%
Delta Dental	1,050	982	496	50.5%
Health Net Dental	1,050	981	402	41.0%
Premier Access	1,050	882	452	51.2%
Universal Care	1,050	989	441	44.6%
Total	5,250	4,807	2,232	46.4%

Although Health Net Dental's response rate was less than 45%, there were at least 75 responses per question which is adequate for producing valid results.


Summary of Responses


The responses to the survey were summarized into four rating and five composite questions. Responses that indicate a positive experience are characterized in achievement scores as identified below. Charts displaying the survey results by dental plan are presented beginning on page 5 of this report.

Rating Questions Responses: For the four rating questions, a 10-point scale was used to assess overall experience with dental plans, providers, specialists and dental care. NCQA has recommended two ways to calculate the survey data. The charts on pages 5 through 8 present the plan scores in both ways. The solid bar shows the percentage of families rating the overall experience with dental plans, dental care,

providers and specialist an 8, 9, or 10. The hollow bars show the percentage of families rating the overall experience with dental plans, dental care, providers and specialists a 9 or 10. While both types of achievement scores are presented in the charts, the narrative refers only to scores based on the 8, 9, and 10 ratings, allowing scores from the 2001 and 2002 survey reports to be compared.

Individual plan scores for the 2002 survey are compared with the overall program score in 2002 and a *benchmark*. This benchmark is based on the highest score achieved by a participating dental plan with a minimum of 75 responses.

 The results of the survey indicated that between 65 to 75 percent of families rated their dental care, dental plan, personal dentist and specialist an 8, 9 or 10. The highest score achieved for the program overall was in the rating of dental care specialist at 75 percent. The lowest score achieved for the program overall was the 65 percent score for the rating of dental plan.

 Of the scores achieved by individual plans, 85 percent was the highest score achieved for overall rating of dental specialist. The lowest score obtained was approximately 53 percent for the overall rating of dental care.

Composite Score Results: For the survey, the composite question is grouped with other questions that relate to the same broad domain of performance. For example, the domain, “Getting Dental Care Quickly” includes questions about getting advice by phone, about how soon appointments were scheduled and about time spent waiting in the dentist’s office. The achievement score for these questions is determined by the percentage of families who respond positively to each question. A response is considered positive if the answers are “not a problem” for the questions comprising the “Getting Needed Dental Care” and “Customer Service” composites, and “usually” and “always” for the “Getting Care Quickly”, “How Well Doctors Communicate” and “Courteous and

Helpful Office Staff” composites. The survey questions that make up the composites scores are listed below.

Getting Needed Dental Care

- Able to get your child a dental office or clinic you are happy with
- Able to get a referral to a specialist for child
- Able to get the care believed necessary for child
- No problems with delays in child’s dental care while awaiting approval

Getting Dental Care Quickly

- Usually or always got help of advice needed for child
- Child usually or always got an appointment to fill or treat a cavity as soon as wanted
- Child usually or always got an appointment for routine care as soon as wanted
- Child usually or always got needed care for mouth pain or dental problem as soon as wanted
- Child never or sometimes waited more than 15 minutes in dentist’s office or clinic

How Well Dentists Communicate

- Dentists usually or always listened carefully
- Never or sometimes had a hard time speaking with or understanding the dentist because you spoke differently
- Dentists usually or always explained things in an understandable way
- Child usually or always got an interpreter when needed.
- Child never or sometimes had a hard time speaking with or understanding dentist because he or she spoke different languages
- Dentists usually or always explained things to child in an understandable way
- Dentists usually or always spent enough time with child

Courteous and Helpful Office Staff

- Usually or always treated with courtesy and respect by office staff

- Office staff usually or always helpful

Customer Service

- Able to find or understand information in written materials
- Able to get help needed when you called child's dental plan's customer service



Scores ranged from approximately 53 to 81 percent of families having a positive experience with the five domains of dental services as described above. The highest score achieved for the program overall was in the rating of *How Well Dentists Communicate* at approximately 81 percent. The lowest program overall score was for *Customer Service* at 51 percent.



With respect to individual dental plan scores, the highest composite score achieved was approximately 94 percent for the *Courteous and Helpful Office Staff* composite. The lowest score achieved by a dental plan was approximately 44 percent for the *Customer Service* composite.

SURVEY RESULTS FOR PARTICIPATING DENTAL PLANS

The results for each participating dental plan are presented in the following charts. Plans that have achievement scores significantly higher or lower than the program score are indicated by a "+" or "-" next to their scores.

CONCLUSIONS

The information presented in this report represents a ground-breaking effort to understand the experience families have with dental plans. Because the D-CAHPS® survey instrument is new, comparative data is not yet available.

The results of the survey show significant variations in the scores between the dental plan

types. The open access EPO dental plans had higher scores than the dental DMO plans. Further study is required to understand the dramatic differences in these results.

The 2002 and 2003 results obtained for the HFP are being analyzed by members of the CAHPS® consortium. Their analysis will result in further refinement of the D-CAHPS® instrument.

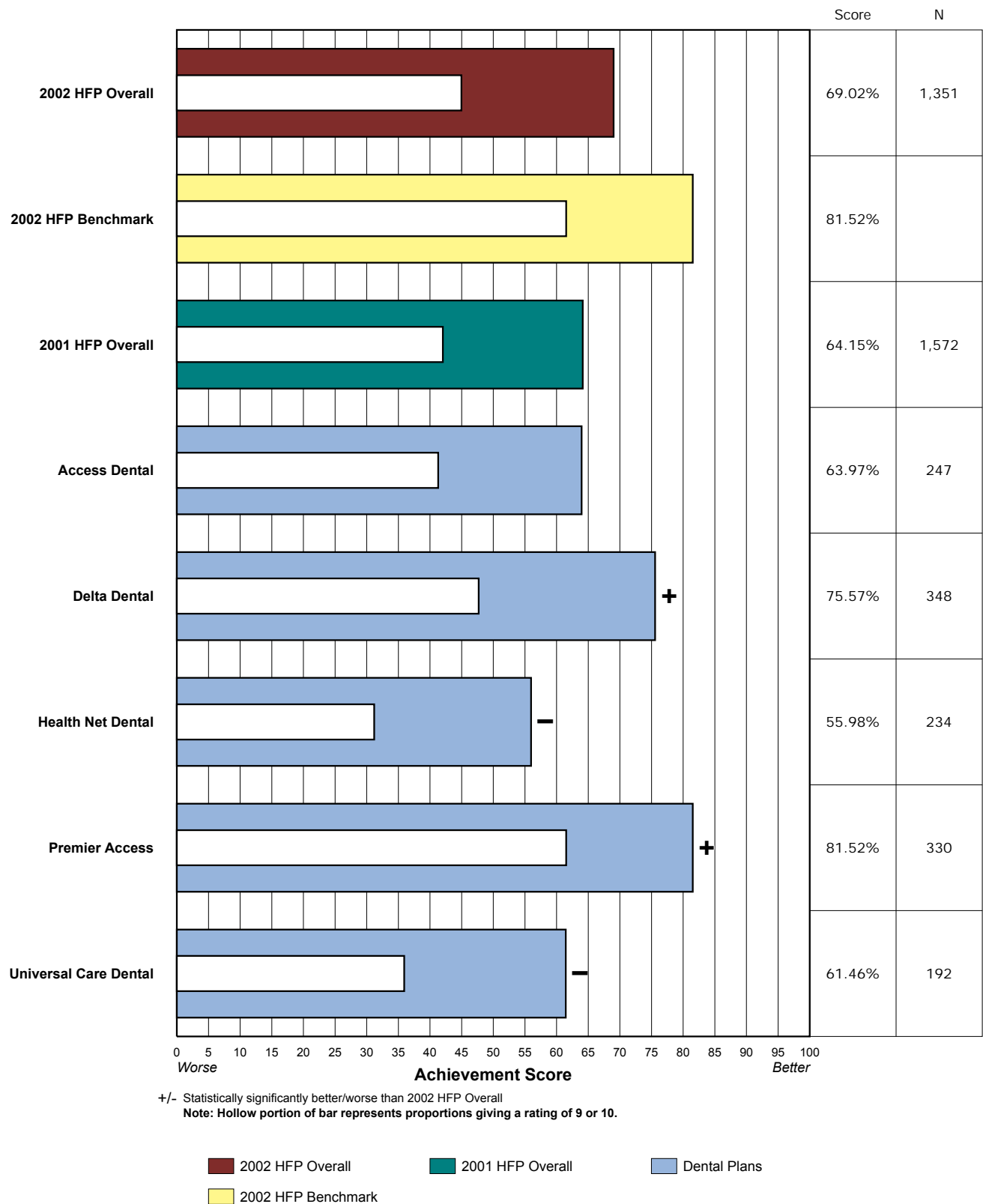
Acknowledgements

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Assisted by Lorraine Brown, Deputy Director, Benefits and Quality Monitoring

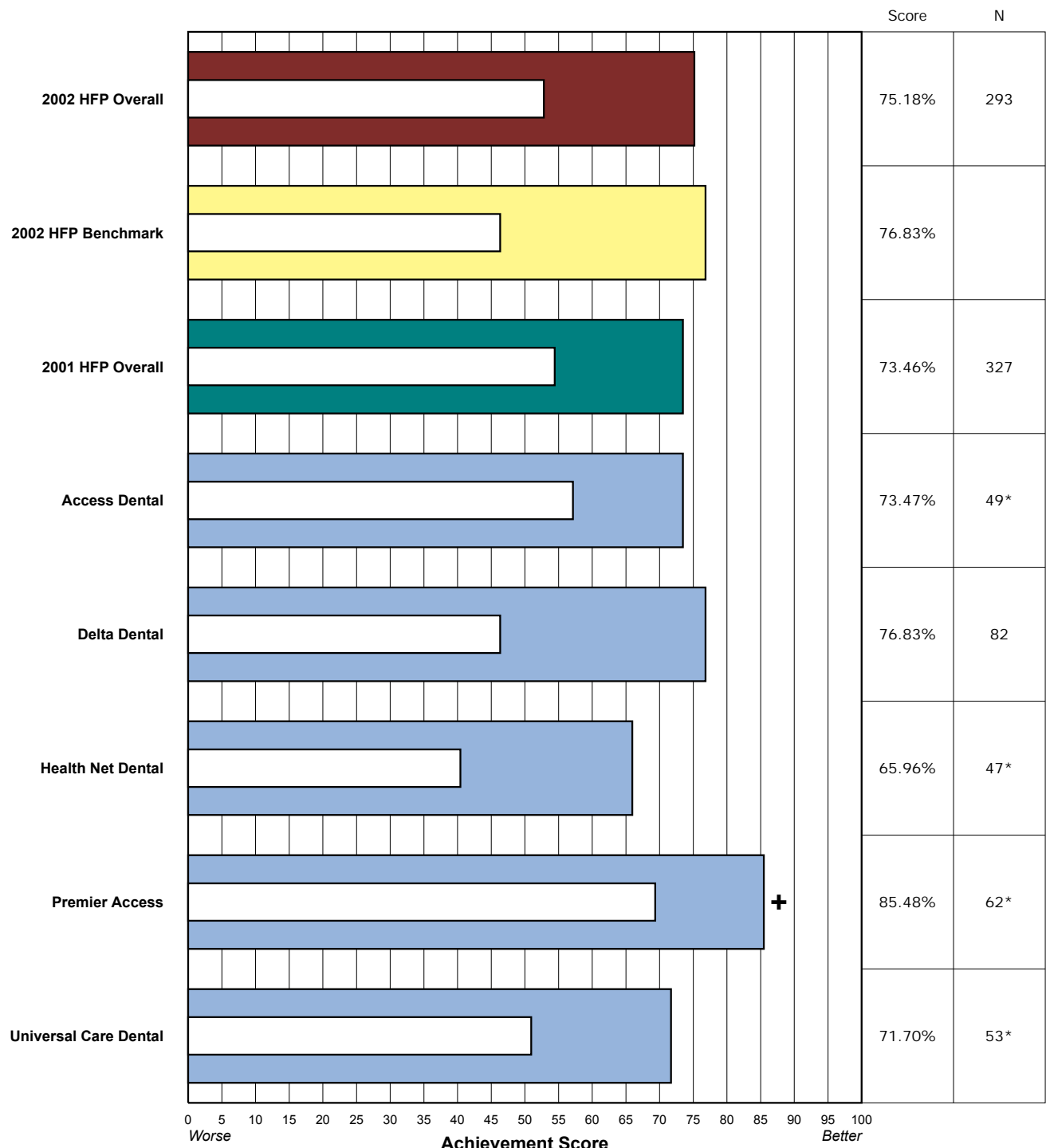
Overall Ratings

Q9. Overall rating of personal dentist



Overall Ratings

Q14. Overall rating of dental specialist



+/- Statistically significantly better/worse than 2002 HFP Overall

* Scores based on observations of less than 75 should be viewed with caution.

Note: Hollow portion of bar represents proportions giving a rating of 9 or 10.

2002 HFP Overall

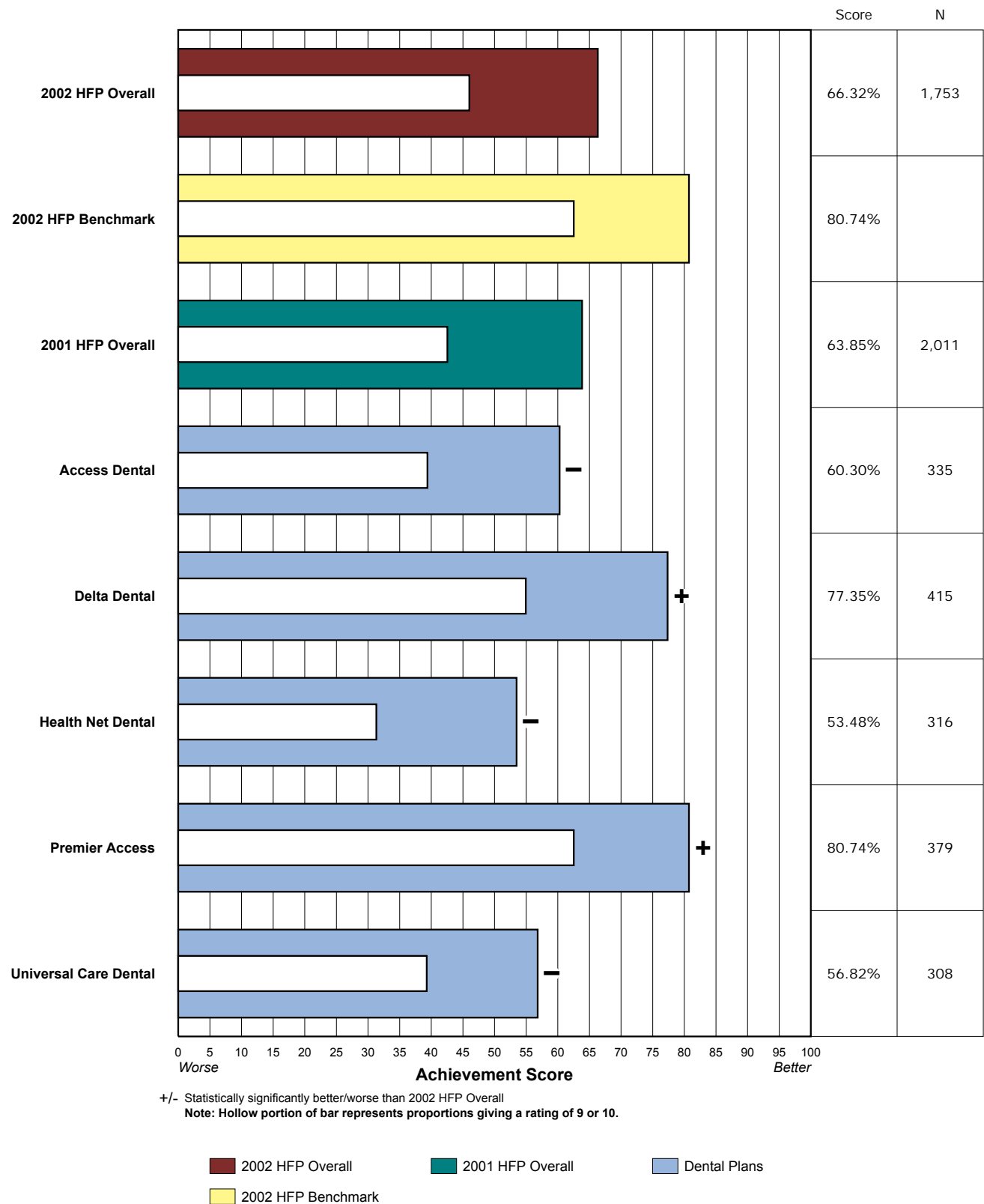
2001 HFP Overall

Dental Plans

2002 HFP Benchmark

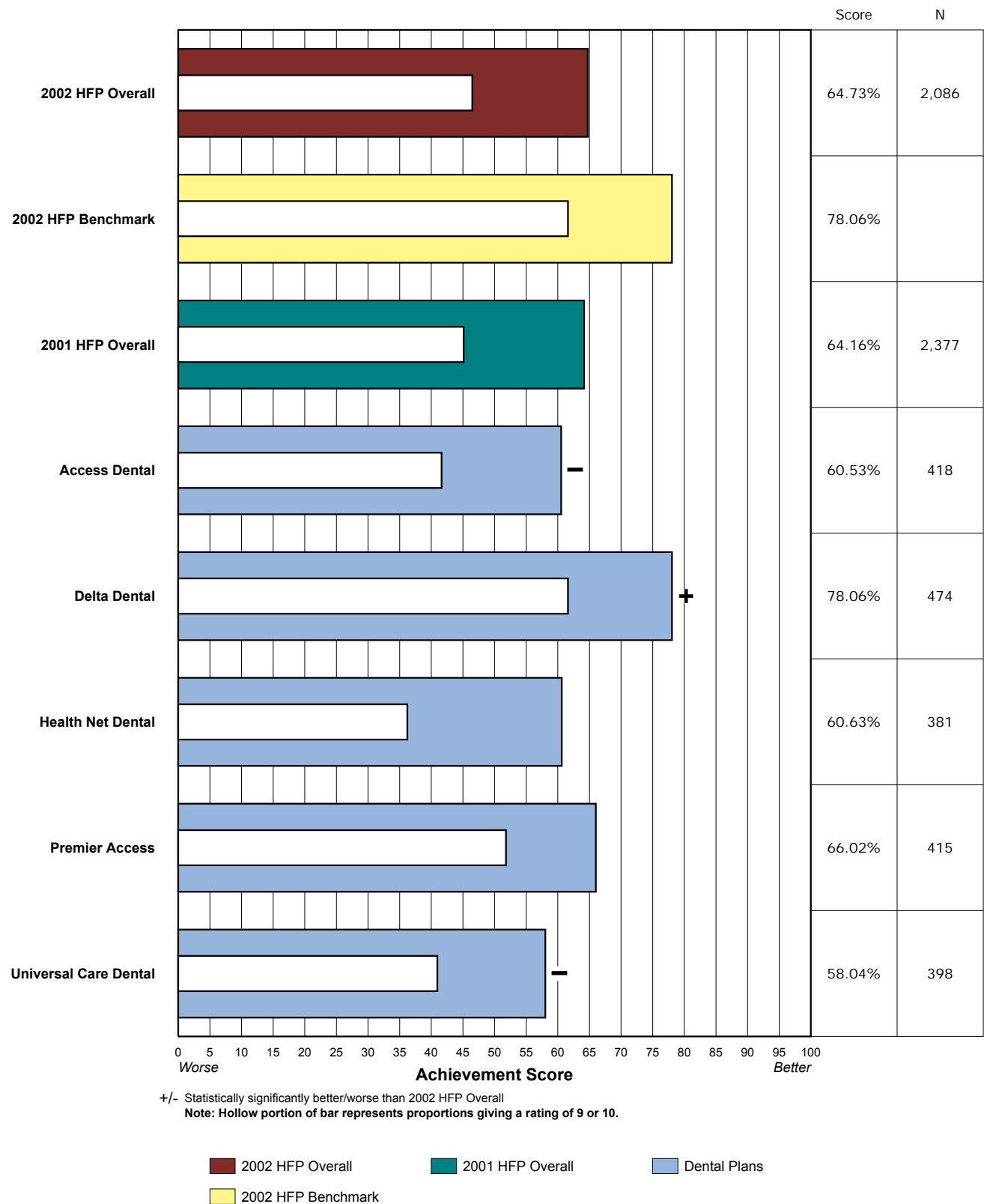
Overall Ratings

Q40. Overall rating of dental care



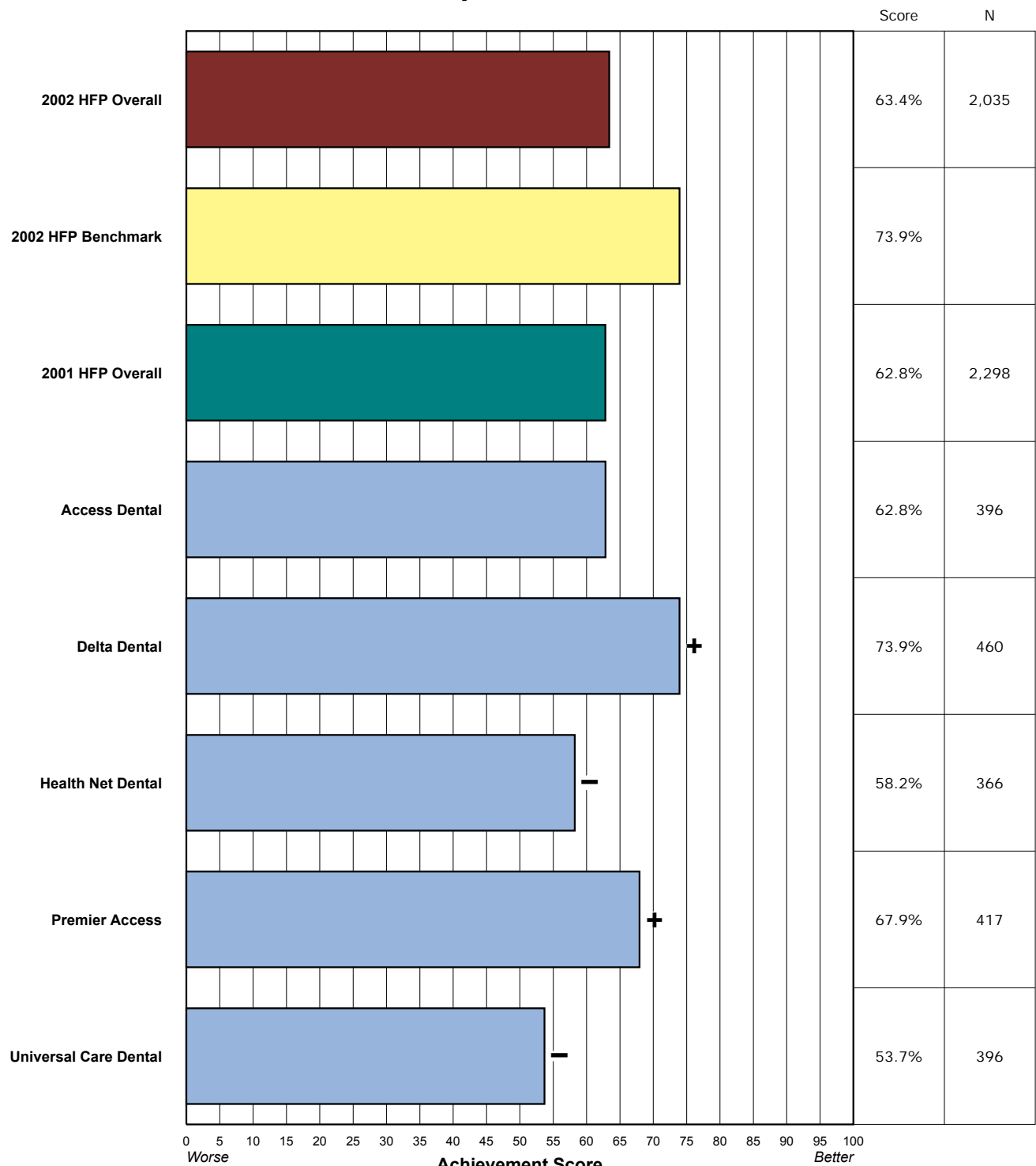
Overall Ratings

Q52. Overall rating of dental plan



Getting Needed Dental Care

Composite Score



2002 HFP Overall

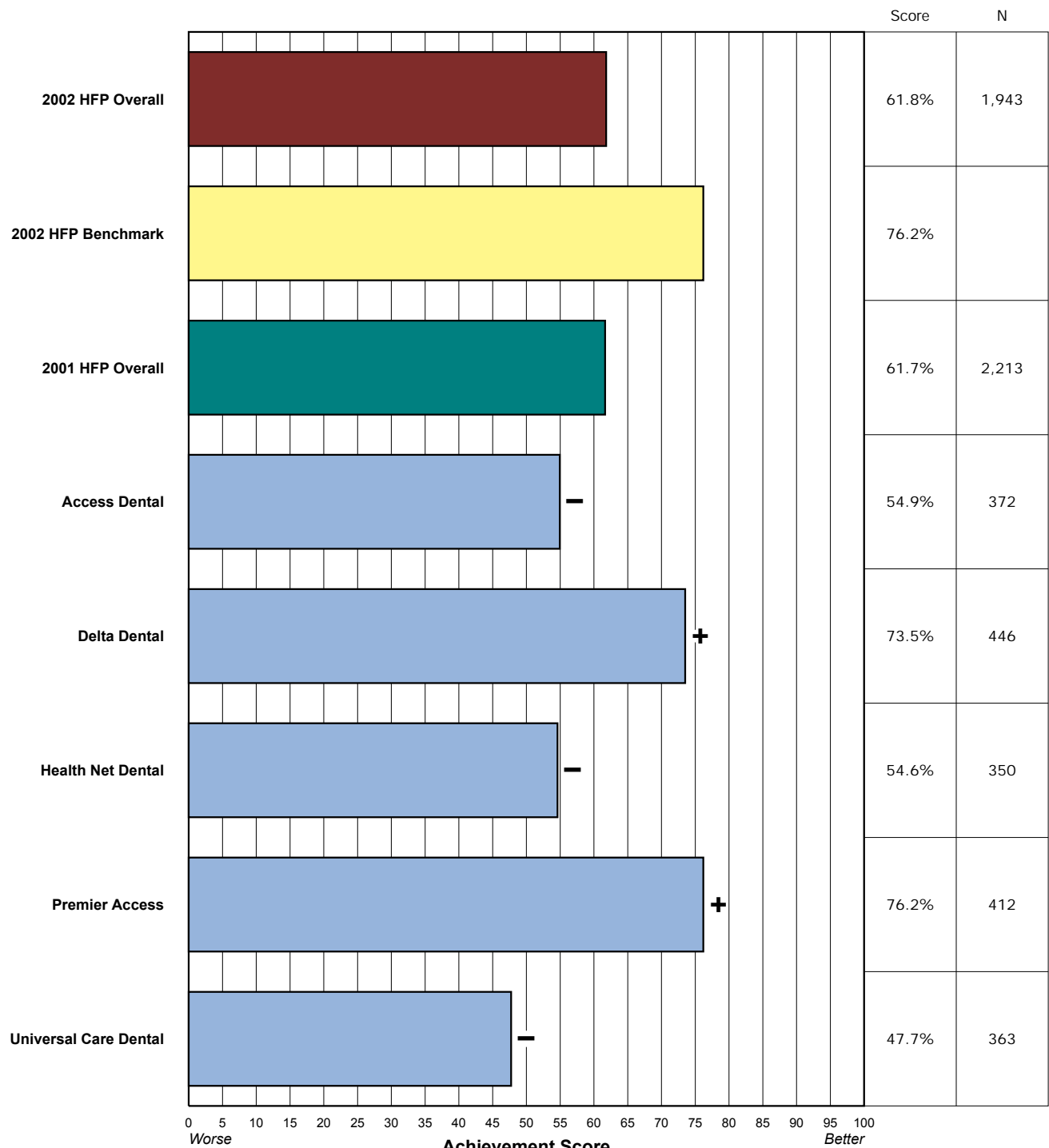
2001 HFP Overall

Dental Plans

2002 HFP Benchmark

Getting Dental Care Quickly

Composite Score



2002 HFP Overall

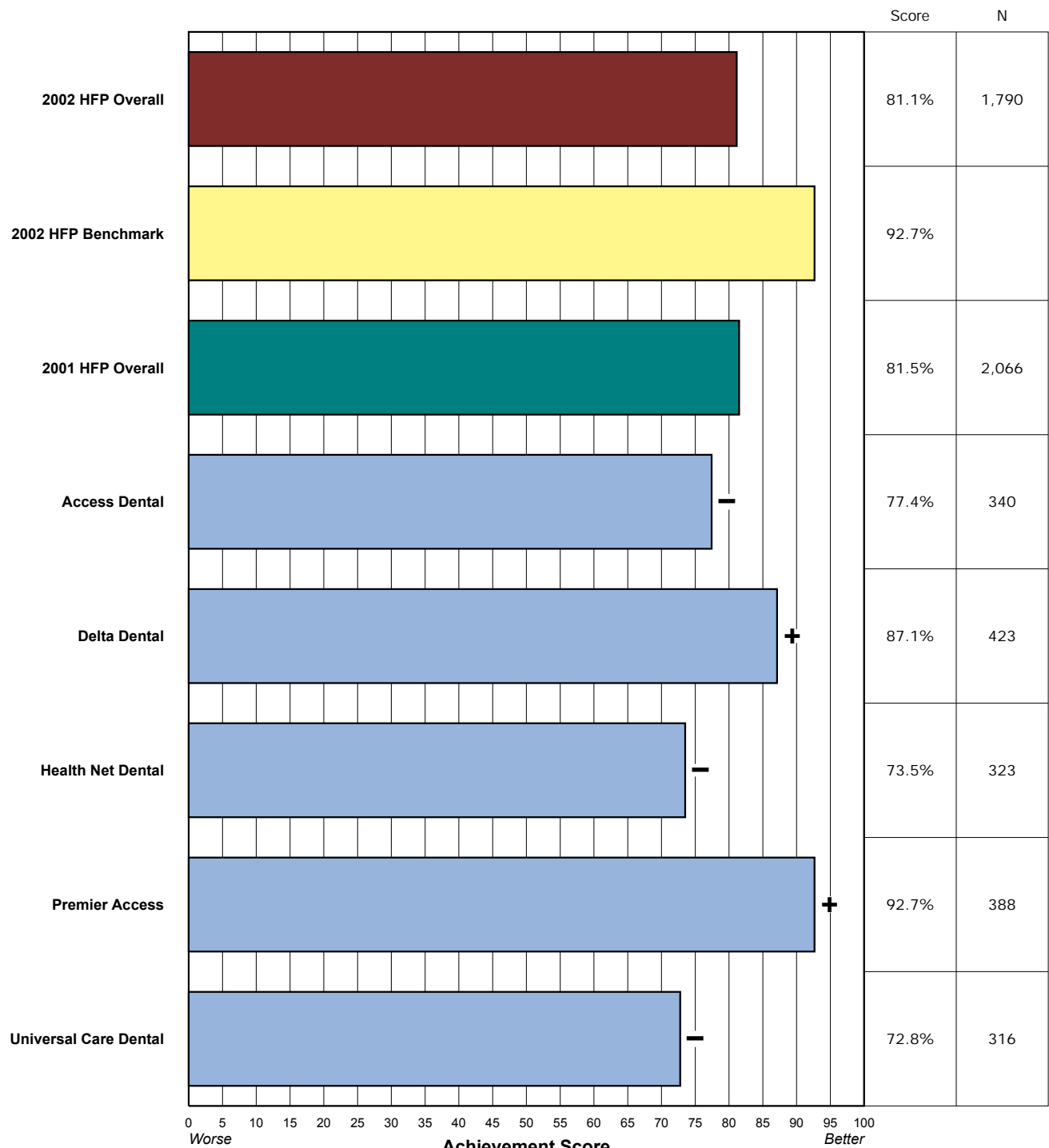
2001 HFP Overall

Dental Plans

2002 HFP Benchmark

How Well Dentists Communicate

Composite Score



2002 HFP Overall

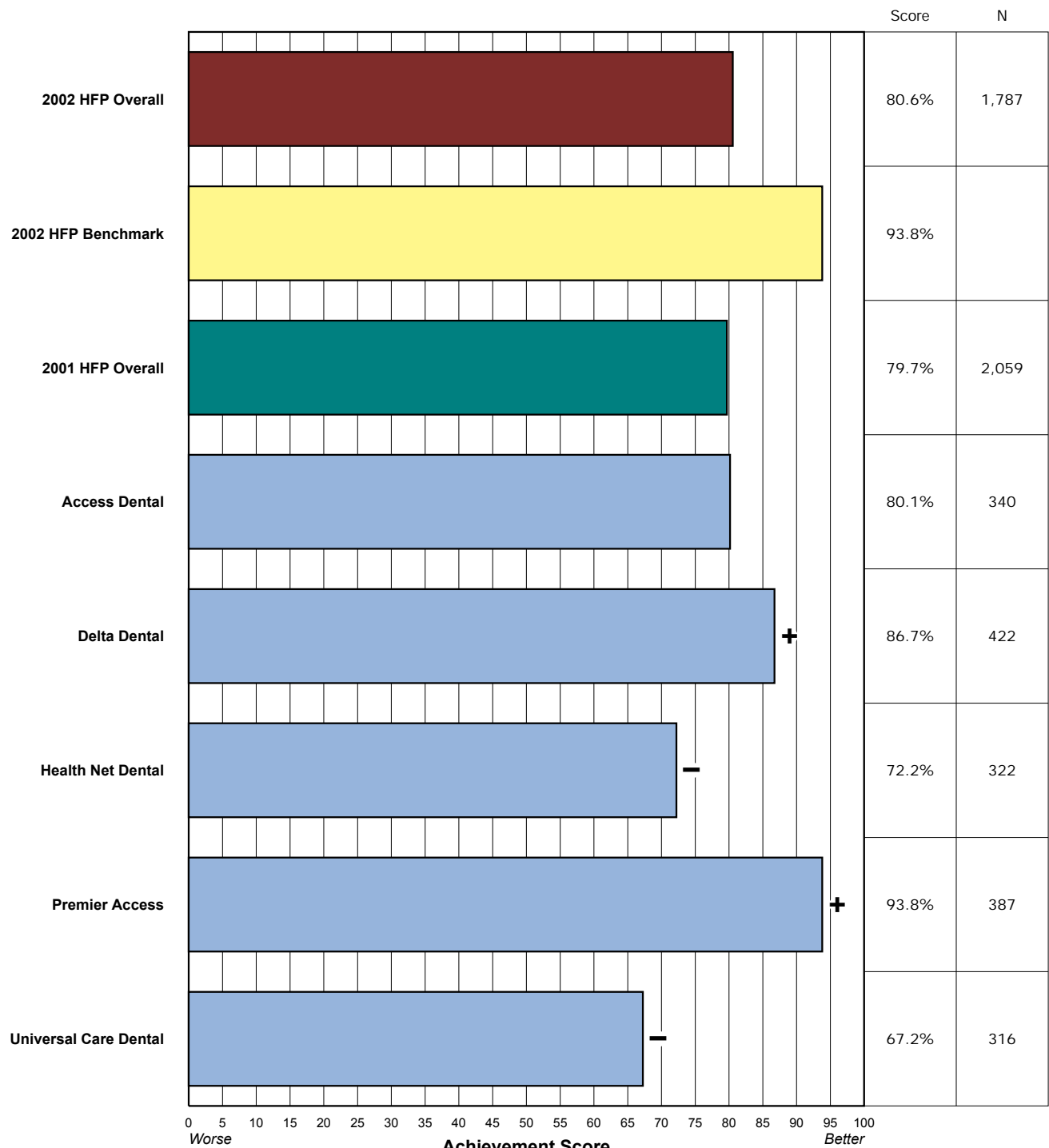
2001 HFP Overall

Dental Plans

2002 HFP Benchmark

Courteous and Helpful Office Staff

Composite Score



2002 HFP Overall

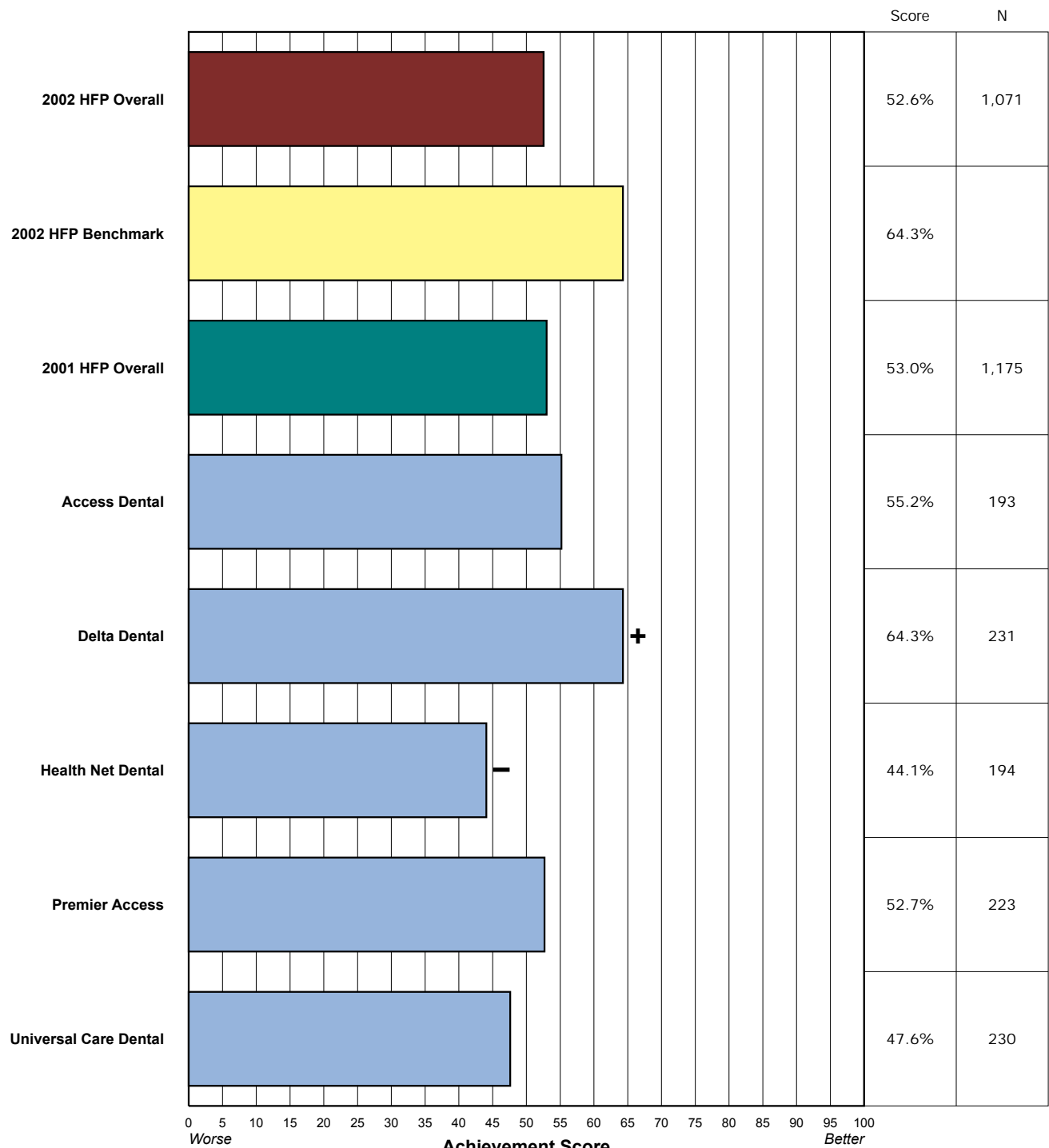
2001 HFP Overall

Dental Plans

2002 HFP Benchmark

Customer Service

Composite Score



+/- Statistically significantly better/worse than 2002 HFP Overall

2002 HFP Overall

2001 HFP Overall

Dental Plans

2002 HFP Benchmark